

**IN THE CLAIMS**

1. (currently amended) An entertainment apparatus usable with a voice input device for receiving a voice input from a player, the entertainment apparatus comprising:

character control means for controlling the operation of a game character;

sound interval extracting means for extracting information of a relative sound interval from the voice of the player received through the voice input device; and

sound volume extracting means for extracting information of a sound volume from the voice of the player received through the voice input device; and

reference voice data storage means for storing reference voice data in advance as an evaluation reference for the relative sound interval and the sound volume of the voice to be inputted by the player, the reference voice data being data other than data included in the voice from the player;

wherein ~~said~~ the character control means periodically compares the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the extracted information of the sound volume with the ~~evaluation~~ reference voice data, determines operation contents of the game character based on the comparison, and makes the game character perform an operation according to a result of the comparison.

2. (previously presented) The entertainment apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising guide display means for indicating contents of the voice to be inputted by the player.

3. (canceled)

4. (previously presented) The entertainment apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising expression mode display means for indicating an expression mode of the voice to be inputted by the player.

5. (currently amended) The entertainment apparatus according to claim 1, wherein:

the operation of the game character is shown by regenerating image data prepared in advance, and

~~said-the~~ character control means changes a regenerating speed of the image data on the basis of the difference between a time for indicating contents of the voice to be inputted by the player and a time for starting the input of the voice by the player.

6. (currently amended) The entertainment apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~said-the~~ character control means compares the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval and, as a result of the comparison, ~~said-the~~ character control means exaggerates an expression of the game character if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is higher than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval, and moderates the expression of the game character if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is lower than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval.

7. (currently amended) The entertainment apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~said-the~~ character control means compares the extracted information of the sound volume and the evaluation reference for the sound volume and, as a result of the comparison, ~~said-the~~ character control means exaggerates a behavior of the game character if the extracted information of the sound volume is larger than the evaluation reference for the sound volume, and moderates the behavior of the game character if the extracted information of the sound volume is smaller than the evaluation reference for the sound volume.

8. (currently amended) A method for controlling the operation of a character in a game executed by an entertainment apparatus, comprising:

extracting information of a relative sound interval and information of a sound volume from voice data of a player upon receipt of a voice input of the player;

periodically comparing the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the extracted information of the sound volume with ~~evaluation-reference~~ voice data, the ~~evaluation-reference~~ voice data being prepared in advance as data other than the voice data input from the player and including an evaluation reference for the relative sound interval and the sound volume of the voice data to be inputted by the player; and

changing the operation of the character based on a result of the comparison.

9. (currently amended) The method for controlling the operation of a character as recited in claim 8, wherein contents of the voice data to be inputted by the player are displayed before the reception of the voice input of the player.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) The method for controlling the operation of a character as recited in claim 9, wherein an expression mode of the voice data to be inputted by the player is displayed together with the contents of the voice data to be inputted by the player before the reception of the voice input of the player.

12. (currently amended) The method for controlling the operation of a character as recited in claim 8, wherein:

the operation of the character is shown by regenerating image data prepared in advance, and

a regenerating speed of the image data is changed on the basis of the difference between a time for outputting the contents of the voice data to be inputted by the player, and a time for starting the input of the voice data by the player.

13. (previously presented) The method for controlling the operation of a character as recited in claim 8, wherein the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval are compared, and as a result, an expression of the character is exaggerated if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is higher than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval, and the expression of the character is set to be moderate if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is lower than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval.

14. (previously presented) The method for controlling the operation of a character as recited in claim 8, wherein the extracted information of the sound volume and the evaluation reference for the sound volume are compared, and as a result, a behavior of the character is exaggerated if the extracted information of the sound volume is larger than the evaluation reference of the sound volume, and the behavior of

the character is moderated if the extracted information of the sound volume is smaller than the evaluation reference of the sound volume.

15. (currently amended) A storage medium having a program recorded therein, said program being executable in an entertainment apparatus usable with a voice input device for receiving a voice input from a player, said program causing the entertainment apparatus to:

extract information of a relative sound interval from the voice of the player received through the voice input device;

extract information of a sound volume from the voice of the player received through the voice input device;

store ~~evaluation-reference~~ voice data prepared in advance as data other than data included in the voice input from the player, the reference voice data and including an evaluation reference for the relative sound interval and the sound volume of the voice to be inputted by the player;

periodically compare the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the extracted information of the sound volume with the ~~evaluation-reference~~ voice data; and

make ~~the~~ a character perform an operation according to a result of the comparison.

16. (currently amended) The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein ~~said the~~ program further causes the entertainment apparatus to perform guide display processing for indicating contents of the voice to be inputted by the player.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) The storage medium according to claim 16, wherein ~~said the~~ program further causes the entertainment apparatus to perform expression mode display processing for indicating an expression mode of the voice to be inputted by the player.

19. (currently amended) The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein:

the operation of ~~said~~ the character is shown by regenerating image data prepared in advance; and

the periodically comparing step includes changing a regenerating speed of the image data on the basis of the difference between a time for indicating contents of the voice to be inputted by the player and a time for starting the input of the voice by the player.

20. (currently amended) The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein the periodically comparing step includes comparing the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval, and as a result of the comparison, exaggerating an expression of the character if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is higher than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval, and moderating the expression of the character if the extracted information of the relative sound interval is lower than the evaluation reference for the relative sound interval.

21. (currently amended) The storage medium according to claim 17, wherein the periodically comparing step includes comparing the extracted information of the sound volume and the evaluation reference for the sound volume, and as a result of the comparison, exaggerating a behavior of the character if the extracted information of the sound volume is larger than the evaluation reference for the sound volume, and moderating the behavior of the character if the extracted information of the sound volume is smaller than the evaluation reference for the sound volume.

22. (currently amended) A system comprising an entertainment apparatus and a program executable in said entertainment apparatus for use with a voice input device for receiving a voice input from a player, wherein said program causes said entertainment apparatus to perform:

sound interval extracting processing for extracting information of a relative sound interval from the voice of the player received through the voice input device;

sound volume extracting processing for extracting information of a sound volume from the voice of the player received through the voice input device;

periodic comparison of the extracted information of the relative sound interval and the extracted information of the sound volume with ~~evaluation-reference~~ voice data other than data included in the voice input from the player, the ~~evaluation~~ reference voice data being prepared in advance and including an evaluation reference for the relative sound interval and the sound volume of the voice to be received through the voice input device; and

character control processing for making ~~the~~ a character perform an operation based on a result of the comparison.